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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

11 March 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Khrushchev's Visit to France

Pursuant to the discussion of the sensitive situation item at the USIB meeting of 8 March, the Board of National Estimates has studied possible implications of Khrushchev's forthcoming visit to France and forwards the attached for your information and as a basis for discussion at the USIB meeting of 15 March.

Sherman Kent

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

11 March 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
SUBJECT: Khrushchev's Visit to France

1. Although Premier Khrushchev's visit to France beginning 15 March calls for numerous conferences with President de Gaulle extending over a two week period, we consider it unlikely that there will be any startling results. Nevertheless, the mere fact of the Khrushchev visit will be regarded by de Gaulle as increasing French stature in the Western Alliance; he may hope to capitalize on the visit in future dealings with his allies. [The Soviet Union's circumspect attitude towards de Gaulle in recent months suggests that Khrushchev regards the visit as a promising opportunity to widen the differences between France and its allies. De Gaulle, however, is probably well aware that the Soviets have little to offer him in return for upsetting or weakening allied unity. Hence, the talks are likely to be limited to each leader's [redacted] assessing the attitude of the other on a variety of subjects, including likely positions at subsequent high level meetings.]

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2. Khrushchev may attempt to persuade de Gaulle that a more forthcoming attitude towards East Germany would permanently divide the German people and hence resolve a traditional French security problem. However, de Gaulle is apparently dedicated to the concept of French security through the solidarity of Western Europe, including the maintenance of the Franco-German rapprochement. De Gaulle has been Adenauer's stoutest defender in support of a hard policy vis-a-vis the Soviets on the Berlin issue. He is almost certainly aware that any move towards an accommodation with East Germany would seriously jeopardize his cordial relationship with Adenauer, something he would be most reluctant to do.

3. Khrushchev may try to get de Gaulle to agree to a limitation on West German rearmament, particularly the independent acquisition of nuclear weapons. While de Gaulle might be sympathetic to such a limitation, he is unlikely to commit himself on any agreement related to West Germany alone. He would believe that such action would seriously strain the Franco-German relationship. It cannot be excluded however, that de Gaulle would privately tell Khrushchev that he would oppose a lifting of the WEU restrictions on German nuclear weapons development.

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4. Khrushchev will almost certainly raise the general subject of disarmament. De Gaulle, who has stated he is not seeking nuclear armament but rather nuclear equality, might be willing to subscribe to a general statement giving top international priority to control and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, although we believe he will attempt to avoid making specific commitments on disarmament while the Geneva talks are in process. Although it is conceivable that Khrushchev might offer some form of technical aid to France in its nuclear development program we think this is highly unlikely. As far as Khrushchev is concerned, this would raise extremely difficult problems with the Communist Chinese. As far as de Gaulle is concerned, it would be completely unacceptable to his allies, and he, himself, would almost certainly be unwilling to have the Soviets participate in France's program.

5. For his part, de Gaulle may attempt to secure from Khrushchev some recognition of France's special position in Africa, especially in Algeria -- either in a joint public statement or perhaps by some act, such as a visit to the Sahara oil fields. We do not believe, however, that to obtain this, he would be willing to make concessions which would seriously antagonize his Western allies.

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6. In general, de Gaulle can be expected to avoid making commitments unacceptable to his allies. Although he wishes to revise the organization of the Atlantic Alliance, he knows full well that it is the best protection France has at the moment. As yet his country does not have a nuclear capability that could enable it to risk doing without the alliance. He is still far from ending the Algerian War, and until this is done, he cannot seriously entertain -- even if he desired to -- a revision of France's basic security policies.

7. General de Gaulle's well known confidence that he is admirably fitted to negotiate with the Soviets, his belief that the USSR has more in common with the West than with Communist China, and his insistence that the most desirable course of long range policy is to exploit common East-West interests as a means of disrupting the Sino-Soviet Alliance cannot be ignored. However, the Gaullist perspective is long, and the General has shown himself capable of patience. He has always guarded against the undertaking of premature initiatives, no matter how convinced he may have been of the ultimate correctness of his assessment of a situation.

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8. Khrushchev and de Gaulle will each be striving to impress the other with the strength of his country and the vigor of his policies. In so doing both parties will probably initially be on their best behavior, but it is possible that the confrontation of two such different personalities will result in serious clashes either open or concealed.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

Sherman Kent

SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

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